

Menace of the Reptile Beer Fund

Grave Charges of Political Activity Have Been Made Against Brewers Who Backed Brisbane

ARTICLE VII

THE UNITED STATES BREWERS' ASSOCIATION was fresh from a plea of nolle contendere—practically a plea of guilty, in the United States District Court at Pittsburgh—on violation of the Federal corrupt practices act when it put up \$55,000 of the fund with which Arthur Brisbane, Hearst's star editor, bought "The Washington Times." The Senators who have succeeded in having the United States Senate order a thorough inquiry into the political activities of the brewing interest claim that the grave charges they make will be sustained through the evidence which this plea prevented from coming into court. Major E. Lowry Humes, who prosecuted the cases, is preparing the evidence for the sub-committee charged with the inquiry. Senator Jones, of Washington, author of the resolution ordering the inquiry, has declared that the evidence would "ruin the reputation of hundreds of men."

The evidence is the winnowing from fifty-four drawers of documents seized in the offices of the United States Brewers' Association in New York, as well as other documents. It fills a packing case, two trunks and a suitcase. It is not complete, for the brewers swore in court that they had destroyed checks, check stubs, bank passbooks and confidential papers up to within a few days before the Pittsburgh Grand Jury inquiry opened, and United States Attorney Humes conceded he could not disprove this. Many brewers summoned as witnesses before that grand jury refused to testify on the ground that their testimony might tend to incriminate them.

A small part of this evidence was brought out during the investigation of the German-American Alliance, and showed that the brewers had given over \$400,000 to the support of that disloyal organization.

Another part of the evidence was summarized by United States Attorney Humes in a memorandum he prepared for the court, which was afterward submitted to Congress. It deals with the funds used by the brewing interest and the political purposes of their organizations. But in addition a considerable light was thrown on the

that they had carefully filed information regarding the activities of all religious and reform societies, such as the Y. M. C. A., the Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League, etc.

That they had instituted boycotts against firms which had taken action contrary to the brewers' interests, notably against the Pennsylvania Railroad and the United States Steel Corporation, because they had issued orders against drinking by their employees, and against H. J. Heinz because of the dry campaign carried on by the Pennsylvania Sabbath School Union, of which he was president.

The Jones resolution charges: "That in order to suppress expressions of opinion hostile to their trade and political interests they have set in operation an extensive system of boycotting of American manufacturers, merchants, railroads and other interests."

Mr. Humes, in his memorandum, declared the evidence showed that in several cases brewing corporations' contributions "were sufficiently large to in itself put the defendant on notice that the funds . . . were not intended for the ordinary trade purposes of a trade organization"; that Percy Androm, an agent of the United States Brewers' Association, received in one year \$525,118.29, the United States Brewers' Association collected in a single year \$756,385.18 and had on deposit at one time more than a million and a half dollars, and that the records are probably incomplete; that the brewers of the country, through a tax of 3 cents a barrel on all beer brewed, provided a fund of \$750,000 a year minimum, and that the only activities of Percy Androm "and his associates were political in nature."

Mr. Humes also quoted from brew-

ers' documents showing an outline for a reorganization of the United States Brewers' Association's political activities, and for propaganda among colleges, libraries, newspapers, etc. Regarding the precautions taken to avoid prosecution for these activities, he says:

"They caused their general counsel to prepare a digest of the laws of the various states of the Union which might affect such corporation activity, and when this digest was prepared it was mailed to Mr. Hugh F. Fox, secretary of the United States Brewers' Association, with the following letter intended for transmittal:

"My Dear Mr. Fox—I hand you herewith prepared booklet showing by states where it is and is not permissible for corporations to make contributions to any political campaign.

"Apparently the State of Illinois

is the only one that is immune on this question.

"No doubt the contents of this will be valuable information for you."

"It is interesting to note," Mr. Humes remarks, "that in the preparation of this booklet or digest Section 83 of the criminal code, the section out of which this indictment grows, was not mentioned, but was apparently entirely overlooked."

In addition to these accusations, directly connected with the Pittsburgh evidence, the Jones resolution makes the following charges:

"That in order to control legislation in the state and nation they have exacted pledges from candidates to office, including Congressmen and United States Senators, before election, such pledges being on file;

"That in order to influence public opinion to their ends they have heavily

subsidized the public press and stipulated, when contracting for advertising space with the newspapers, that a certain amount be editorial space, the literary material for the space being provided from the brewers' central office in New York;

"That they were allied to powerful sub-organizations, among them the German-American Alliance, whose charter was revoked by the unanimous vote of Congress; the National Association of Commerce and Labor and the Manufacturers and Dealers' Association, and that they have their ramifications in other organizations apparently neutral in character."

A. Mitchell Palmer, United States Alien Property Custodian, whose exposure of the brewing interests' support of Brisbane started the demand for this investigation, thus describes the liquor traffic:

"The organized liquor traffic of the country is a vicious interest because it

has been unpatriotic, because it had been pro-German in its sympathies and conduct. Around these great brewery organizations owned by rich men, almost all of them of German birth and sympathy, at least before we entered the war, have grown up the societies, all the organizations of this country intended to keep young German immigrants from becoming real American citizens.

"It is around the sängerfests and sängerbunds and organizations of that kind, generally financed by the rich brewers, that the young Germans that come to America are taught to remember first the Fatherland and second America."

The full truth regarding the activities barely hinted at in these exposures, and especially the alleged connection between the brewers, the disloyal propaganda and the newspapers, is expected to come out in the Senate inquiry.



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